

**THE LAYMEN'S MISSIONARY MOVEMENT**



**The Interests of the  
Nation in the Missions  
of the Church.**

AN ADDRESS BY

**J. A. MACDONALD,**

**Editor-in-Chief, The Globe, Toronto.**

**CANADIAN COUNCIL  
TORONTO**







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By "the nation" is meant very concretely this nation to which we belong, this complex unity of peoples gathered together in the north of this great continent, this Canadian nation, which of late years and by events beyond our reckoning or control has been pushed out into the limelight on the great world-stage, with its new world-parts to play, its new world-obligations that cannot be shirked, its new world-problems that will not be put by. And by "the church" I mean that complex and comprehensive body of people, of whatever name, who believe in Jesus Christ as their own and the world's Redeemer, who profess allegiance to Him and who are not unmindful of His world-wide programme.

Now this is my question: What great interests of this Canadian nation are involved and at stake in the undertakings and achievements and ideals of the Canadian Church? In raising this question I should like to keep in mind those who, like myself, have to do day after day chiefly with the business and policies of the state, with national administration at home and with expansion and influence abroad. I should like to help some statesmen to appreciate more justly than is sometimes done something of how and to what degree Canadian democracy is dependent on the Canadian church not only for its vitality at home but also for its virility and prestige abroad. And I should like, too, to help you delegates to appreciate the national bearing and worth of all those religious services and all this missionary endeavor to which here and in your home congregations you give yourselves with such



enthusiasm and devotion. I would have you feel the throb of your nation's life throughout the entire range of your church activities. When you go back to the routine of your congregation's work, I would have you ever remember that what you do unselfishly and without applause or recompense in the obscurity of your parish carries in its heart a handful of the life-seed of the nation and that some day, somewhere, on some mountain top, the fruit of that sowing shall shake like Lebanon.

A moment ago I used the word democracy—Canadian democracy. That great word is full of meaning alike for the nation and for the church. It means more for the people of this North American continent to-day than for any other people in any age of the world's history. It signifies the enfranchisement of the crowd, the day of power for the average man. On this continent, in the United States and in Canada, the seat of authority is not in the dictum of the ruler, but in the will of the people. The compelling power behind Parliament is not that which comes downward from the crown but that which comes upward from the crowd. This is the land and this the day of the man in the street. That significant political fact means much for the church. It offers the most splendid opportunity and involves the most urgent obligation. It may be that under monarchy the government of a city or of a country might grow corrupt and sink into decay and yet the church be free from blame, but if in any city or nation where the people rule there flourish political crime and unabashed public evil, the church cannot be held guiltless, for in the democracy the church has its supreme chance.

The two great organs of the democracy are the state and the church. Democracy has many other organs—the press, school, social and industrial organizations, benevolent societies, clubs, unions, leagues, associations of all sorts. These all, in so



far as they educate and mould opinion among their members and direct or enrich the life of the community, are organs of the democracy. Indeed, it often happens that these secondary and voluntary institutions in the democracy create and organize public opinion on great questions which ultimately find their way into Parliament and there are registered as the will of the people.

It remains true, however, that the state and the church are the two chief organs of the democracy. They are the most important because they are the most representative and most truly democratic. They come nearer to the people. They speak for the people and to the people with more undisputed authority. Each has its own sphere. Their functions are distinct. They act and react on each other. If either fails the other suffers loss. If churchmen hold back from their duty as citizens of the state they sow seeds of evil for their church. If citizens divorce the state from the ideals and obligations of religion, tares and dragon's teeth will spring up for the nation.

Let us now think for a little about some of the great national interests which must be conserved and safeguarded, if the nation itself is to come to its own and to endure. And let us see, as we pass along, how the guarding of these national interests is at once the great opportunity and the inescapable obligation of the church:

### **High National Ideals.**

I. The nation cannot retain unimpaired its own strength or secure to its own citizens either true happiness or real liberty, unless the atmosphere of its life is kept pure and its ideals of nationhood high. Like the individual, the nation lives by an invisible flame within. If that flame burns low in the fogs of national selfishness or goes out in the darkness of sensual indulgence, no wealth of mater-



ial resources or external pomp and pride of power can save the nation from inevitable and utter decay.

Unless there be integrity and purity in all the relations of life, unless the home is kept sacred as the citadel of the nation, unless family life and social ties are sanctified, unless there is awakened and made strong a community of interest and of feeling between class and class in the industrial world, unless honesty is maintained in trade and patriotism in politics, the nation cannot be held together except by the corroding lust for gain or for power which eats away the fiber of national character and poisons the blood of national life.

And it is at once the opportunity and the responsibility of the church so to relate itself to the Canadian situation as to be a savor of life unto life for the nation. There is no substitute for the church as the moral leader of democracy on this continent. Think of the church's equipment: its agencies everywhere, its message to the heart and conscience of the individual, its ideal a regenerated social order, its emphasis on moral distinctions, moral obligations and moral retributions, its motive the redemptive power and constraining love of a Divine Personality. What is there, what could there be, so equipped for service and so set at the strategic points as is the church in Canada to-day?

Of course the church has its limitations, but they are the limitations of its human environments and human instruments, not of its genius or ideal. Of course the church makes mistakes, is sometimes narrow in its vision and warped in its judgment and stinted in its service. Of course it sometimes misplaces the emphasis, misconceives its own function, and plays at precedence with the state when it should be out in the great world of struggle and high endeavor. But when the worst is said it will still be true that more than any other agency or institution the Canadian church stands as the bul-



wark of what is most worth while, and the inspiration and the agent of what is most worth doing, in the abounding life of this Canadian nation.

### **World-Wide National Obligations.**

2. If this Canadian nation would indeed be great among the nations of the world its citizens must cherish supremely a sense of obligation for the enlightenment and uplift of mankind, and for the peace and higher civilization of the world; and it is the business of the church to teach that essential lesson and to lead the way.

We hear on all sides, and in some quarters with growing emphasis, the cry "Canada for the Canadians." On the other side of the line it is "America for the Americans." Very good, and very impressive. But who gave the present generation of people in Canada and the United States the title deed to this continent? By what authority can our seven millions and their seventy millions divide supremacy over this western world, over its land, over its natural resources, over its trade? Who are we, holding as we do for but a brief moment our places and doing as best we may our day's work—who are we that we should say to all the world, "Hands off!" Is it by the accident of present occupation, or by the fact of last century's conquest, or by the boast of this century's power? Let history tell us whether by titles such as these any nation has held its own. Let events on these lakes and lands now called America tell us if mere occupation or mere conquest or mere display of power is a title deed inalienable in the arbitraments of war.

No; we must learn as nations what the church teaches us as individuals, that no gift or opportunity or resource is ours for our own sakes or selfish uses alone. This continent with its riches is no more an unassailable heritage of the present generation that occupy and use it than it was of the In-



dians or the mound-builders who were displaced and driven back with each rising tide of new civilization. World-service is the only tide by which in a world like ours this claim of supremacy can be other than a mocking echo of our own selfishness and folly.

And within the two great nations, holding this continent, a great new thing may even yet be done for mankind. It is not too late but that democracy might have a new chance to make good what was only dreamed in ancient Greece and missed in the French Republic. In the wholesomeness of our social life, in our industrial brotherhood, in the honesty of our trade and the integrity of our politics and the idealism of our nationhood, democracy in America may strike out for some new and noble thing and may present to the world a realized example on the plain of the nations of what Jesus meant by the true greatness in life when he said: "Whosoever would be first among you, shall be your servant."

### **The Standard of National Righteousness.**

3. True greatness for the Canadian nation requires that truth and honor and justice shall characterize all the relations of this nation with the outside world and especially with the nations of the Orient and with the heathen and pagan lands. And the maintenance of this standard of national righteousness is involved in the church's devotion to the enterprises of foreign missions.

Of all the uncivilized remainders of life in our Christian civilization this is perhaps the largest, that having outgrown the suspicions of savagery as between individuals we still cherish the pagan and barbaric idea that other nations must be our enemies, and our prosperity dependent upon their embarrassment. We have come to apply the Ten Commandments to our social and business life, but in



our dealings with other nations we readily discount the Decalogue and regard as chimerical in the realm of international politics the Master's command : "Love one another." But there can be no national greatness on any basis that would make greatness for the individual impossible. "Noblesse oblige" is for the nation as truly as for the man. And the nations of this continent must learn more perfectly the lesson of the Great Life.

And the church by its unselfish services to "the regions beyond" leads the way for the nation, and the reflex of that missionary service will make definitely for honesty in the trade and integrity in the treaty regulations between this country and the nations of the non-Christian world. The men in the churches of America cannot go on forever giving of their wealth and of their blood for the redemption of Africa and of Japan and of China and of India, and then stand idly by to see their work undone and their sacrifice turned to shame by the accursed opium trade and rum trade and slave trade, or by the legalized or unlegalized dishonesty of our commerce or the chicanery of our political relations. The going of influential laymen from the churches of Canada and the United States and Great Britain on tours of investigation among the great mission fields of the heathen world will awaken echoes in our Boards of Trade and will have its effect on the legislation at Ottawa and Washington and London.

### **World Neighborhood and World Brotherhood.**

4. In this crisis-time among the nations on the Pacific, the century of service by the missionaries of the church will mean more for North America than would a standing army or a costly navy.

It is true, as Mr. Ellis said recently, that "there is something doing" among the nations of the



world. The strategic points are now on the Pacific and the storm centres have shifted from the Mediterranean and the Atlantic to the shores of the erstwhile sleepy East. There never could have been isolation for Canada, being as she is the halfway house of a world-wide empire. And never again can there be isolation for the United States. Canada and the United States now are in world-politics and must remain there forever. There can be no going back. Chance happenings which were not on their programme but which were brought to pass in the increasing purpose running through the ages give these nations world-wide obligations which cannot any more be obscured or put away. Without venturing on the disputed ground of United States politics of imperialism, I for one cannot repine over the obvious and meaningful fact that Britain, who for too long has had to carry the burden of Anglo-Saxon civilization almost alone, has now at her side this strong-armed and brave-hearted republic loyal to the same ideals of humanity and dominated by the same faith in God that sent the leaderless legion from zone to zone with the flag of freedom and the cross of service.

And now, almost in the twinkling of an eye, the whole world situation is changed. There are no longer any "foreign countries." By our transcontinental railway systems and our transoceanic steamship services we have made the whole world a neighborhood. But nearness of touch and ready exchange of speech and of goods have not changed the hearts of men or made brethren of those who by race and tradition have been aliens and enemies. World-neighborhood without world-brotherhood means war, and such a war as might one day be on the Pacific would mean hell—hell for the world.

The supreme purpose of Christian missions for a whole century has been the brotherhood of all men under the fatherhood of God through the redemp-



tive love and sacrificial service of Jesus Christ. To make that dream come true would be to turn the Armageddon of the world into the peace and goodwill foretold in the Bethlehem song.

### **The Path to World-Peace.**

5. The securing and maintaining of peace among the nations, especially between the West and East, depends not so much on trade regulations and treaty rights as on the dominance of common ideals and the vitalizing touch of a common life. Tariff walls and exclusion laws as between America and the Orient may be necessary in the exigencies of our industries and politics, but they do not make for brotherhood and peace. They may be necessary, but that necessity of the state makes still more urgent and compelling the obligation resting upon the church, as the other great organ of our democracy, to go through those walls and overleap those laws, and to create in Japan and China and India centres of interest and thought and life that will understand and appreciate things in the Canadian and United States situation that are deeper than tariffs or trade. Channels must be opened through which the faith and love and truth that have made us free may pass unchecked to them, and from them may come in return their great contribution to the new age's interpretation of the mysteries of the Christianity of Jesus Christ. Faith alone goes deep enough into life to give that touch that makes all men kin. Our forms of civil government will not fit the genius of the Orient, and our religious creeds will not express the faith that is in Christ as it comes to them, but the Christ in whom we believe is larger than our understandings of him, and when he becomes incarnated again in the life of the Orient there will come a depth and richness to our gospel such as will give a new significance to his world-mastering evangel.



The missionaries of the church have indeed been the pioneers and first ambassadors of the nation. Not for conquest, not for commerce, but for the world's redemption they

“Yearned beyond the skyline,  
Where the strange roads go down.”

By the blood of their martyrs the ways of civilization were blazed the world around. By their gospel of love and service, not in Asia alone, but in Europe, in Britain, in America, a nation is born in a day. And this new birth of Christian nations into a life of world-service means a new brotherhood of world-peace into which the nations of the world shall bring their glory and honor. To help on that redemption of our national ideals at home and that evangelization of heathen nations abroad is the supreme purpose of this Laymen's Movement for missions among the churches of this continent. And that is A MAN'S JOB.







